

IN THE CLAIMS

Applicant hereby presents the claims, their status in the application, and amendments thereto as indicated:

1. (Currently Amended) A storage device comprising:

a processor;

a computer interface communicably connected to the processor, wherein the computer interface is adapted to enable communications exclusively between the processor ~~to communicate with a computer~~ and the processor as a direct-attached storage peripheral;

a network interface communicably connected to the processor to enable the processor to communicate ~~with a remote file server~~ over a network, wherein the processor is adapted to employ the network interface for communications exclusively with the remote file server select file servers to the exclusion of other file servers; and

a storage means communicably connected to the processor, the processor being adapted to have read and write access to the storage means, and the computer having read-only access to the storage means via the processor, wherein upon receipt of a file request from the computer the processor is adapted to sequentially (1) determine whether the file is cached on the storage means and provide the file to the computer on a read-only basis if the file is cached on the storage means, (2) request the file from the file server select file servers if the file is not cached on the storage means, and if the file is obtainable from the file server select file servers, cache the obtained file on the storage means and provide the obtained file to the computer on a read-only basis, or (3) return a file unavailable notice to the computer if the file is not cached on the storage means and not obtainable from the file server select file servers.

2. (Original) The storage device of claim 1, wherein the computer is communicably connected to a network server through the network interface.
3. (Original) The storage device of claim 1, wherein the storage means comprises random access media.
4. (Currently Amended) A computer network comprising
a file-server at least one select file server;
a network server;
a computer communicably connected to the network server, the computer being remotely disposed from the select file server and the network server;
a storage device communicably connected to the computer and the select file server, the storage device being in communication with the computer as a ~~direct attached storage peripheral~~ and comprising a processor, a computer interface, a network interface, and a storage means, wherein
the computer interface is adapted to enable communications exclusively between the computer and the storage device;
the processor is adapted to employ the network interface for communications exclusively with the select file server to the exclusion of other file servers;
the processor is adapted to have read and write access to the storage means;
the computer has read-only access to the storage means via the processor; and
upon receipt of a file request from the computer the processor is adapted to sequentially (1) determine whether the file is cached on the storage means and provide the file to the computer on a read-only basis if the file is cached on the storage means, (2) request the file from the select file server if the file is not

cached on the storage means, and if the file is obtainable from the select file server, cache the obtained file on the storage means and provide the obtained file to the computer on a read-only basis, or (3) return a file unavailable notice to the computer if the file is not cached on the storage means and not obtainable from the select file server.

5. (Original) The computer network of claim 4, wherein the computer is communicably connected to the network server through the storage device.

6. (Original) The computer network of claim 4, wherein the storage means comprises random access media.

7. (Currently Amended) A method of providing a file to a computer comprising

receiving in a storage device a request from the computer for the file, wherein the storage device is in communication with the computer ~~as a direct attached storage peripheral~~ and includes a processor, a storage means, and a computer interface, the computer interface being adapted to enable communications exclusively between the computer and the storage device, the computer having read-only access to the storage means via the processor;

determining whether the file is cached on the storage means;

determining, if the file is not cached on the storage means, whether the file is available from a remote file server select file servers, the storage device being adapted to have network communications with the select file servers to the exclusion of other file servers, and if the file is available from the remote file server select file servers, retrieving the file from the remote file server select file servers and caching the retrieved file on the storage means; and

providing to the computer the file on a read-only basis if the file is cached on the storage means.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7 further comprising providing to the computer a response indicating that the file is not available if the file is not cached on the storage means.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 7 further comprising deleting the cached file from the storage means upon receiving a command from the file-server select file servers to delete the cached file.

10. (Currently Amended) A method for providing updated files to a computer comprising:

providing to the computer, from a storage device in exclusive communication with the computer ~~as a direct-attached storage peripheral such that the computer has read-only access to the storage device~~, a list identifying a plurality of files which the storage device may retrieve from a ~~file-server~~ select file servers, wherein the storage device is adapted to communicate with the select file servers over a network to the exclusion of other file servers;

retrieving from the ~~file-server~~ select file servers, with the storage device, a first file of the plurality of files when the computer communicates to the storage device a request for the first file;

caching within the storage device a copy of the first file that the computer may access on a read-only basis;

receiving at the storage device notice from the ~~file-server~~ select file servers that an updated version of the first file exists on the ~~file-server~~ select file servers, whereupon the cached copy of the first file is deleted.

11. (Currently Amended) A storage device comprising:

a processor;

a computer interface communicably connected to the processor, the computer interface being adapted to enable the processor to communicate exclusively with a computer as a direct-attached storage peripheral;

a network interface communicably connected to the processor to enable the processor to communicate with a file-server over a network, wherein the processor is adapted to employ the network interface for communications exclusively with the remote file-server select file servers to the exclusion of other file servers; and

a storage means communicably connected to the processor, the processor being adapted to have read and write access to the storage means, and the computer having read-only access to the storage means via the processor, wherein upon the computer being booted, the computer sends a request for a file to the processor, the file being a bootstrap file or operating system file, and upon receipt of the request, the processor is adapted to sequentially (1) determine whether the boot file is cached on the storage means and provide the boot file to the computer on a read-only basis if the boot file is cached on the storage means, (2) request the boot file from the file-server select file servers if the boot file is not cached on the storage means, and if the boot file is obtainable from the file-server select file servers, cache the obtained boot file on the storage means and provide the obtained boot file to the computer on a read-only basis, or (3) return a file unavailable notice to the computer if the boot file is not cached on the storage means and not obtainable from the file-server select file servers.

12. (Previously Presented) The storage device of claim 11, wherein the computer is communicably connected to a network server through the network interface.

13. (Previously Presented) The storage device of claim 11, wherein the storage means comprises random access media.

14. (Currently Amended) A computer network comprising
a file server at least one select file server;
a network server;
a computer communicably connected to the network server;
a storage device communicably connected to the computer and the file server
select file server, the storage device being in exclusive communication with the
computer as a direct-attached storage peripheral and comprising a processor and a
storage means, wherein

the processor is adapted to employ the network interface for
communications exclusively with the select file server to the exclusion of other
file servers;

the processor is adapted to have read and write access to the storage
means;

the computer has read-only access to the storage means via the
processor; and

upon the computer being booted, the computer sends a request for a file
to the processor, the file being a bootstrap file or operating system file, and upon
receipt of the request, the processor is adapted to sequentially (1) determine
whether the boot file is cached on the storage means and provide the boot file to
the computer on a read-only basis if the boot file is cached on the storage
means, (2) request the boot file from the select file server if the boot file is not
cached on the storage means, and if the boot file is obtainable from the select file
server, cache the obtained boot file on the storage means and provide the
obtained boot file to the computer on a read-only basis, or (3) return a file
unavailable notice to the computer if the boot file is not cached on the storage
means and not obtainable from the select file server.

15. (Previously Presented) The computer network of claim 14, wherein the computer is communicably connected to the network server through the storage device.